



P O R T L A N D
CITY AUDITOR
Elections

October 31, 2022

Rene Gonzalez
PO Box 82356
Portland, OR 97282

Rene for Portland
1010 SW 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97202

DELIVERED ELECTRONICALLY
campaign@reneforportland.com
rene@artifexpartners.com
natalie@summitfinancenw.com

Notice of Determination No Violations

Campaign Regulation Complaint No. 2022-05-RG

Dear Rene Gonzalez and Rene for Portland:

The Auditor's Office received Complaint No. 2022-05-RG on September 29, 2022, which alleged campaign Rene for Portland did not disclose required dominant contributor funding information on its website and social media platforms. The complaint alleged violations of [Portland City Charter Section 3-303](#) and corresponding [Portland City Code Section 2.10.030](#).

The Auditor's Office has determined no violations of campaign finance regulations occurred.

Investigation and Findings

The Auditor's Office sent Notice of Complaint No. 2022-05-RG to candidate committee Rene for Portland on October 3, 2022. The period for Rene for Portland to submit a response and supplemental information ended on October 17, 2022. The City Elections Office conducted an investigation of this complaint, and the findings of fact are as follows:

Disclosures on Website and Social Media Platforms

Complaint No. 2022-05-RG asserts campaign Rene for Portland violated City campaign finance disclosure regulations by not including Schnitzer Property Management, LLC (Schnitzer), as a dominant contributor on its website and social media platforms. Upon review of the campaign's webpage, Facebook page, and Twitter account, the Auditor's Office found that Schnitzer was not listed as a contributor. Code Subsection 2.10.080 F. states that dominant contributors include any entities that contribute more than \$1,016 to a candidate committee during an election cycle. Therefore, Schnitzer would qualify as a dominant contributor subject to disclosure only if it contributed over \$1,016 to Rene for Portland.



Previous Related Investigation

The Auditor's Office received a related complaint alleging that candidate committee Rene for Portland received contributions from Schnitzer in the form of subsidized rent and parking. The Auditor's Office referred the information to the Small Donor Elections Program (Program), because candidate Rene Gonzalez is a participant, and that Program is not part of the Auditor's Office. The Program conducted a separate investigation to determine if there was evidence of violations of its regulations. The Program's investigative findings bear on those of the Auditor's Office because contributions allowed by the Program are also allowed under the campaign finance regulations that fall under the authority of the Auditor's Office.

Small Donor Elections Program Findings Summary

In its investigation of referred [Complaint No. 2022-03-RG](#), the Program found that Rene for Portland violated its requirements by accepting Schnitzer's in-kind contributions for both parking and rent. It found no portion of the subsidized parking or rent from Schnitzer qualified as an allowable contribution from an allowable contributing entity under its regulations. The Program valued the cost of subsidized parking at an estimated fair market value of \$230 per month per parking space. It issued its determination on September 20, 2022. See the Program's [Administrative Sanction – Proposed Penalty](#) letter.

Auditor's Office Findings Summary

The Auditor's Office used the Program's estimated value for parking in the Auditor's determination of Complaint No. 2022-03-RG, finding that Rene for Portland violated campaign finance regulations by accepting the in-kind parking contributions. The Auditor's Office also found that under the Auditor's regulations, there was no violation for in-kind rent contributions. Code Subsection 2.10.080 E.2, which is enforced by the Auditor's Office, does not consider "rooms...for use by a candidate committee free or at a reduced charge" to be "contributions." The Auditor's Office issued its determination on October 20, 2022, the statutory deadline. See [Complaint No. 2022-03-RG Notice of Determination of Violations and Civil Penalty](#).

Administrative Hearing on Small Donor Elections Program Determination

Rene for Portland appealed the Small Donor Elections Program's determination to the Office of Administrative Hearings on October 6, 2022. Administrative Law Judge Joe Allen heard the matter and issued a Final Order for the appeal on October 27, 2022.

Judge Allen Final Order Summary - Parking

Judge Allen concluded that the Program failed to prove Rene for Portland paid less than fair market value for the office space, which included parking. Judge Allen found the Program could not justifiably separate the parking from the total subsidized rent. Judge Allen concluded the Program failed to justify its assessed fair market value for the office space and its separate assessment for the parking. The Final Order concluded that the Program did not prove Rene for Portland received prohibited contributions from Schnitzer. See [OAH Case No. 2022-ABC-05692 Final Order](#). The Auditor's Office therefore concludes that the parking is, at least as of the date of the issuance of this decision, an amount that is allowed by the Program.

Judge Allen's Final Order is a final decision under City Code 2.16.170, unless the Program appeals it. No appeal had been filed at the time of this determination. The Auditor's

Office expresses no opinion as to whether Rene for Portland has, in fact, violated the laws the Program is responsible for enforcing or the likelihood of the Program's success in prevailing on its original determination should it appeal.

Conclusion and Outcome

With consideration to facts relevant to Complaint No. 2022-05-RG, the Auditor's Office finds the evidence presently available to the Auditor's Office is insufficient to determine if an in-kind subsidized parking contribution was made by Schnitzer to Rene for Portland. The Auditor's Office also finds that, under the current record, there is insufficient evidence that Schnitzer exceeded the \$1,016 contribution limit to qualify as a dominant contributor subject to disclosure. The Auditor's Office, therefore, finds the current record of evidence does not substantiate that Rene for Portland violated City Charter Section 3-303 and corresponding City Code Section 2.10.030.

Additional Authority and Appeals

This Notice of Determination is issued pursuant to the Auditor's authority under City Code Section 2.10.050. That section sets forth the process for implementation and enforcement of the provisions of City Code Chapter 2.10, including the recipient's appeal rights.

The recipient may request a reconsideration of this decision at any time before the decision becomes final, as provided in the Auditor's Administrative Rule [ARA 13.03\(D\)\(5\)](#).

This Notice of Determination becomes final within 30 calendar days from its issuance unless an appeal of this determination is filed. An appeal may be filed with the Multnomah County Circuit Court within 30 days of the issuance of a decision, as described in [City Code Section 2.10.050 I](#) and Auditor's Administrative Rule [ARA 13.02\(D\)\(6\)](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Louise Hansen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and "H".

Louise Hansen
City Elections Officer